

# The Evening Bulletin.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1908.

PUBLISHED BY JOHN H. OBERLY & CO.

The Evening Bulletin is published every afternoon, 125 Washington Avenue, (Democrat Hall), by John H. Oberly & Co., for circulation by carriers, newsmen, and the mails.

The Weekly Bulletin, a large eight-page forty column paper, is issued on Thursday, for the mails, and is for sale at our counter and by newsdealers.

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## EDUCATIONAL.

### Normal University OF SOUTHERN ILLINOIS

Important Address of the Committee  
APPOINTED AT CENTRALIA.

It is one of the most encouraging signs of the times in which we live that we find so deep an interest in the cause of popular education. The schools of our section of the State are regarded by our people as the foundation of their hope for the future welfare of society. Among the evidences of this newly awakened and wide spread interest was the very large convention of the friends of education at Centralia, September 1st, 2d, and 3d, resulting in the organization of the "Southern Illinois Educational Association." That association, composed of several hundred earnest laborers in the cause of education, was unanimously of opinion that the establishment of a Normal University in Southern Illinois was imperatively demanded by the state of things in our section of the State, and necessary to the highest prosperity and success of our schools.

The association adopted the following preamble and resolutions on the subject:

WHEREAS, The public school system in this State is recognized as being vitally essential to the preservation of freedom and virtue, and therefore to the future existence of Democratic principle or Republican government; and

WHEREAS, The efficiency of this system depends largely upon the ability and training of the teacher; and

WHEREAS, The great State of Illinois has in its wisdom established a Normal University in the Northern half of the State, of which we are justly proud, and this University having demonstrated its usefulness and the necessity for its existence, and being quite unable, notwithstanding the greatest exertion of its overworked faculty, to supply the demand for teachers well trained in their profession for the public schools; and

WHEREAS, The population and wealth of the State of Illinois has more than doubled since the opening of the present Normal University; therefore be it

Resolved, That this Association appoint a committee of fifteen, whose duty it shall be to memorialize the Legislature at its next session, and do all other things which may be necessary to secure the early establishment of a Normal University in Southern Illinois.

Resolved, That the County Superintendents and all school officers and friends of education in Southern Illinois, be requested to co-operate with this committee.

In pursuance of the first of these resolutions the association designated the proposed committee; and that committee held a meeting at Odin, October 16th, the proceedings of which have been largely published by the press of the State. It was judged advisable to add as many more to the committee, and that to have a representation of all the parts and interests of Southern Illinois. The committee also made arrangements for preparing an address to the people and circulating a memorial to the Legislature of the State on the subject.

The committee would now address to you a few earnest words, and submit to your consideration a few plain facts, bearing upon this most important interest:

1. The necessity of well trained and thoroughly taught teachers need not be argued or dwelt upon at length. One good teacher thoroughly qualified for his great work—knowing what to teach and how, and drilled in the best methods of educating, will accomplish more than a dozen with a low or average grade of qualification. It is a recognized fact that we can only expect such teachers when we have schools specially adapted to their training. The drill is not more necessary to the soldier nor the medical school, the hospital and the dissecting room to the physician, than are Normal Schools to the supply of the country with teachers such as the times demand. Occasionally we may find a really good teacher without Normal training. They are the exceptions to the general rule. They are found only where special natural endowments are combined with extraordinary dili-

gence and energy, and a peculiar adaptation to the work of teaching. The experience of all enlightened and civilized communities has demonstrated the expediency and economy of appropriating the means necessary to establish and maintain a sufficient number of Normal Schools to supply the demand for teachers. Those exceptional cases of which we have spoken, with a high order of native endowment will make much better teachers, and the standard and average of teaching ability, efficiency and success will be immensely elevated by Normal education.

2. This enterprise is undertaken in no spirit of envy or unholy rivalry of the excellent institution already established in the Northern section of our great State. We rejoice in its success. We feel a just State pride in the good work it has already accomplished. It is not to blame for not having accomplished all we need, for no single institution could. If we were to write her memorial it should be in the gospel terms—"She hath done what she could." May her shadow ever grow longer—not by the decline of her sun, but by her own increasing elevation.

3. The peculiar shape, and the immense territorial extent and population of our State point to the necessity for another Normal University. Covering 5 deg. 30 min. of latitude, and stretching from north to south nearly four hundred (400) miles, with her greatest width south of the only State Normal School, with almost every acre of her thirty-five and a half millions (35,459,200) not only inhabitable and tillable but fertile, and with ten thousand free schools already established, it could not be expected that one Normal University could long meet the wants of such a State. Just think of it, her extreme southern inhabitants must travel two hundred and fifty miles to reach the present Normal University. If large numbers so remote should avail themselves of this Normal School, their traveling expenses would in a few years endow another. But the trouble is you cannot induce a sufficient attendance from such a distance. The distance prevents acquaintance, and hence a want of sympathy. With a feeble circulation the remote extremities soon grow cold. If the attendance could be secured it would still be impossible to accommodate all who need Normal instruction in one school. The fifty-one counties in the southern half of the State had in 1860, a population of nearly seven hundred thousand (630,353.) Any one acquainted with their growth and progress, must suppose that, by this time the population is considerably above one million.

Economy may suggest that schools of every kind should be as large as can be well handled by one Board of Instruction. But there is a limit beyond which enlargement ceases to be either economical or wise. And when the catalogue of an institution reaches one thousand names of pupils we may well suppose it is nearing that limit, if it be not already reached. Our "Normal University" presents us a grand total 1043 for the last year—that is, in both departments, Normal and Model.

4. Our origin, history and condition point to the need of such a Normal school. The southern portion of the State was originally settled by emigration from States in which popular education had not been so advanced or general as in some more favored sections. The tide of emigration, moving westward, passed above or through our territory.

Strong prejudices against our section of the State were quite general. Those unfounded and injurious ideas are fast disappearing. Our "Egypt" home is beginning to rise to a juster appreciation of its true character. It is becoming known that for health, climate, mineral resources, fruit growing, grazing and general agriculture, we have a country that will compare favorably with any other upon earth, and possessing some very decided advantages. It is coming to be understood that we have a population rich in all the native elements of good character, and capable, by the refining and enlightening influences of religion and education, of rising to the level of the highest and best forms of social life and civilization. The rough marble, needing only the polishing hand of the artist to develop the beautiful model of the statuary. We may not thank God that we are better than other men—we do claim to be their equals. The circumstances of our past history have only retarded the march of education and high intelligence. Like the pent-up waters, the enemy of our people will give them a broader flow and a mightier force when the barriers are removed. We demand for our people a just consideration by our legislators, a fair opportunity for our educational development, and an equal division with the others of the means and facilities of that development. We have comparatively few institutions of learning of academical or collegiate character. We need more of them. And we especially need a Normal university for the training of our teachers.

5. We understand there will be an effort made this winter to induce the Legislature to authorize the establishment of County Normal Schools, or such schools supported by counties combining for that purpose. We make no opposition to any counties, north or south, having such schools, if they feel able to sustain them. But we suggest that our counties are not yet generally ready for such a movement, and

that a first want, for the interest of the whole State, is a few larger, better endowed, and more widely influential schools, properly located, for the advantage of our whole population. Let us have a Normal University easily accessible to the youth of Southern Illinois, and, with the one already established, the immediate and pressing wants of our people will be met and supplied.

We have heard, and the statement is well authorized, that at the time of the establishment and endowment of the present State Normal University objection was made that its location was eccentric. It was answered, "let us have this now in the north—it will not be long till our great State will need another, and then you shall have it in the South." In our judgment the time has come to remind our friends of that promise, and to ask its fulfillment.

7. We offer, in conclusion, a few practical suggestions as to the modes in which our influence may be put forth for the accomplishment of this purpose. We call upon the press, in Southern Illinois, especially, to keep this matter before the people. We ask those in our several counties and localities who wield "the pen of a ready writer," to prepare articles for their papers, which shall set forth the desirableness, the need and practicability, of such an institution. We ask teachers to talk of it in the schoolroom, discuss it in the Institute, and give their whole influence for a measure which can only ennoble and exalt their profession, and make it more adequately remunerative and useful. We invite school officers, especially County Superintendents, whose examinations of teachers have taught them the whole truth about the value of Normal training and the great need of it, to give to this movement their best thoughts and efforts. We urge upon all the people to see their legislators, already chosen, before they leave home for Springfield, and bring before them the propriety, the importance and the hopefulness of this measure. Some of us may visit the seat of government during the legislative session and have influence there. Let us tell our representatives that we are not satisfied with their proposition to give us a Southern Penitentiary. We will swap that for a Normal School. We prefer schools to prevent crime, to prisons for its punishment. We suggest to the several cities towns and neighborhoods that may consider their localities eligible for such an institution, to agitate the question of its location. The munificent offers of aid from Normal and Champaign induced the location of their important institutions. We beseech all the people to think of it, talk about it, and work for it. Let the following brief petition to the General Assembly of the State be faithfully circulated, and as numerous citizens of Illinois respectfully petition your honorable body to pass an act establishing a Normal University in Southern Illinois.

Let the voice of the people go up to their legislators "like the sound of many waters." What we ask is due to us, fair to others, and good for the whole State. This is the substance "in a nutshell." The details can be arranged hereafter.

The committee on this subject consists of the following persons, viz:  
Capt. Daniel Hurd, John S. Haywood, Theodore Hyde, Gov. G. Kenner, W. M. Peoples, Thos. S. Ridgeway, J. W. Blair, Chas. W. Beecher, Col. D. H. Brush, Hon. S. L. Bryan, O. B. Nichols, Hon. W. H. Green, Gen. E. Mitchell, Hon. W. R. Morrison, Dr. R. Allen, Gen. John A. Logan, W. I. N. Fisher, Hon. S. S. Marshall, James Dawson, Hon. G. B. Baum, Thos. W. Hynes, Hon. W. C. Flagg, B. W. Henry, Rev. E. M. West, Col. P. Pease, Rev. W. H. Scott, J. C. Tulley, Hon. J. F. Alexander, Col. J. Pettigrew, Thos. Quick, Hon. John Schofield, Hon. J. W. Westcott, Hon. M. Crawford, Simeon Wright, Col. F. Hecker.

THOS. W. HYNES, Secretary.

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